From:	VM
To:	Microsoft ATR
Date:	11/19/01 7:39pm
Subject:	article regarding antitrust settlement with Microsoft

From http://www.siliconvalley.com/docs/opinion/dgillmor/dg101101.htm

Microsoft using XP to tighten grip on users

BY DAN GILLMOR
Mercury News

At long last, Microsoft has released a consumer-oriented operating
system that won't be in danger of regular failures. What a shame, if
not a surprising one, that Microsoft has ratcheted up its standard
set of anticompetitive tactics with the release of Windows XP.

If you buy a new Intel-compatible computer you'll have essentially no
choice in the matter. Microsoft effectively controls the software
side of the personal-computer industry, and it has decreed that
Windows XP is what you'll run. The questions are different this time.

If you aren't buying a new PC soon, should you replace your current
operating system with XP? I say no, unless the stability of your
current software is so awful that you can't stand it anymore.

And if you are getting XP on a new computer, are there ways to
mitigate Microsoft's ever-growing control-freakery and have things
your own way, not Microsoft's? Not always.

The increase in reliability is a major improvement for home users.
I've been running the business-oriented Windows 2000 on my laptop
computer. XP is based on the same foundation, and it's like the
difference between wood and cardboard. One tends to be sturdy. The
other tends not to be.

There are also some intriguing changes in the user-interface, the
screen that greets you when you start the system, and the way it
works. I can take or leave most of them, but novices will find that
Windows XP is in many ways easier to use than its predecessors.

Naturally, Microsoft is not content with the unprecedented advance of
selling a reliable consumer product. With its grip on the computer
industry, it has also decided to steer its customers down new and
sometimes disturbing paths.

If you buy the upgrade software, you'll be required to register the
software with Microsoft. If you don't, the operating system will stop
working. Later, if you've changed your PC's hardware sufficiently to

trigger Microsoft's paranoid fear that someone may be trying to make an unauthorized copy of the operating system, you'll need to call the company and get its permission to keep using your computer.

Microsoft is also using its desktop monopoly to herd you into its own corral. Again and again, you'll be steered to Microsoft or Microsoft partner sites and services, thereby reducing your choice unless you want to make extra effort.

Then there's the Passport authentication system. You are required to sign up for it if you want to use the instant-messaging software that comes with the operating system, and most users will do so by default because most users do what they're told.

Passport is the linchpin to Microsoft's next generation of software -- its aim to convert packaged products into pay-as-you-go services that run on the Web. You need to think very hard about whether you want to give Microsoft the keys to your financial and online identities. You may trust Microsoft to keep its word not to abuse this position, but the company's fairly abysmal record on security should give you considerable pause.

The bottom line on Windows XP is simple. Reliability is coming with many strings attached. Only a monopolist could get away with this, which is exactly the point.

Dan Gillmor is the Mercury News' technology columnist. Visit Dan's online column, eJournal (www.siliconvalley.com/dangillmor). E-mail dgillmor@sjmercury.com; phone (408) 920-5016; fax (408) 920-5917. PGP fingerprint: FE68 46C9 80C9 BC6E 3DD0 BE57 AD49 1487 CEDC 5C14.

--